

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project

Adaptive Management Oversight Committee

Standard Operating Procedure

Title: Mortality and Injury Response

Number: 12.0

File Name: MW SOP 12.Mortality and Injury Response.Final.20050430.doc

Purpose: This SOP defines the procedures by which IFT members respond to Mexican wolf mortalities or injuries, and notify the appropriate Law Enforcement (LE) officer. It supersedes relevant sections of the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (USFWS 1998), and therefore represents, in part, the “Service Approved Management Plan” referenced in the Mexican Wolf Final Rule (50 CFR 17.84(k)).

Exceptions: None. Per SOP 2.0, AMOC must approve any exceptions to this SOP.

Background: USFWS has jurisdiction to investigate the taking of Mexican wolves pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, *Title 16, United States Code, Sections(s) 1531-1544 and Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 17*. If a Mexican wolf is found injured or dead, USFWS Special Agents will assume primary responsibility for investigating the cause of injury or death and determining whether a crime has been committed.

IFT members are often the first to identify a wolf mortality or injury, while monitoring and managing free-ranging wolves. They may encounter a possible mortality based on a telemetry signal, or an actual dead wolf. Thus, it is crucial that all IFT members know what is expected of them under such circumstances, to ensure proper handling of the incident, and a thorough and timely investigation.

Procedures:

1. Report of a dead Mexican wolf
 - a. Get name, address, and phone number of the reporting party.
 - b. Get as much specific location information as possible, including road numbers, UTM's, and a map or explicit directions.
 - c. Fill out an Incident Report Form (Appendix A) and the Non-Project Personnel Observation Report Form (Appendix B).
 - d. Advise the reporting party to keep everybody away from the scene, to preserve evidence should a crime have been committed. Ask the reporting party to note any pertinent information in the area, such as vehicle license plate information, descriptions of people, locations and descriptions of camps in the area, etc.
 - e. Thank the reporting party for the information.
 - f. Notify your Supervisor.
 - g. Call the following LE contacts until you reach someone; then follow their instructions for responding to the incident.
 - i. USFWS Law Enforcement:

- (1) For dead wolves in Arizona call:
 - (a) Special Agent in Alpine, Arizona (James Ashburner)
 - (b) Resident Agent in Charge in Mesa, Arizona (Doug McKenna)
 - (c) If USFWS agents are not available:
 - (i) If the report is for non-tribal lands, call the appropriate AGFD Wildlife Manager on their AGFD radio. If unsuccessful, call AGFD Radio Dispatch and instruct Dispatch to radio or call at home the appropriate AGFD Wildlife Manager for the area where the dead wolf was reported.
 - (ii) If the report is for White Mountain Apache Tribal Lands, call WMAT Radio Dispatch.
 - (iii) If the report is for San Carlos Apache Tribal Lands, call SCAT Radio Dispatch.
 - (2) For dead wolves in New Mexico call:
 - (a) Special Agent in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Brian Lakes)
 - (b) Resident Agent in Charge in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Tom Karabanoff)
 - (c) If USFWS Special Agents are not available, call:
 - (i) Nick Smith, NMDGF Conservation Officer
 - (ii) NMDGF Radio Dispatch
 - h. Call and report to the Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator (John Morgart) and Assistant Coordinator (Colleen Buchanan).
2. Detecting a mortality signal of a dead Mexican wolf. If you are radio-tracking and hear a mortality signal (approximately 90-120 beats per minute, be sure to record the exact number of beats per minute).
- a. Be calm and discreet. Do not say, “dead wolf” or “wolf mortality,” over the radio; avoid excessive radio communication.
 - i. When communicating on radio, use “10-86” for a wolf mortality.
 - b. Try to get as accurate a location as possible using telemetry, but do not attempt to get a visual contact.
 - c. Immediately contact the appropriate law enforcement official and follow their instructions. The officer may want you to confirm that it is mortality and not a malfunctioning collar or sleeping wolf, or stay out of the area until the officer arrives.
 - i. If the officer directs you to approach the scene:
 - (1) Park your vehicle away from the immediate area, to preserve any vehicle/people tracks that might be critical to an investigation.
 - (2) Use a travel route that is least likely to disturb evidence, e.g. footprints, vehicle tracks, blood trail, presence of hair dislodged by a bullet wound, etc.
 - (3) If weather conditions might deteriorate evidence, take photographs of vehicle tracks, footprints, or any other evidence gathered to facilitate further investigation.
 - (4) Do not approach the site any closer than necessary to confirm a mortality.
 - d. Contact the IFT, tell them what the situation is, and use them to make the necessary contacts if you cannot reach an LE official.
 - e. If you cannot establish radio communication, move to a better location or a telephone and make the necessary calls.

- f. Record all human activity in the area, including license plates, vehicles, camps, etc. Do not confront any members of the public.
3. If you observe a dead wolf.
- a. Do not approach the wolf.
 - b. Notify your Supervisor and the IFT Leader for the area.
 - c. Immediately contact an LE official listed above (see Step 1), and follow their instructions. When communicating on radio, use “10-86” for a wolf mortality.
 - d. Contact another member of the IFT, and tell them what the situation is. Use them to make the necessary contacts if you cannot reach an LE official.
 - e. Remain within sight of the carcass (get GPS coordinates), but as far away as possible (the farther away the better) to avoid evidence contamination.
 - f. Await arrival of LE personnel. You may have to leave the carcass to rendezvous with responding LE personnel, per their instruction.
 - i. Unless instructed by LE personnel, do not tarp the carcass.
 - ii. Note any license plates and people in the area, but **Do Not** question anyone.
 - iii. Do not disturb any vehicle tire marks or footprints in the area.
 - iv. Route traffic around the area to protect evidence, or take pictures without disturbing them, especially if more vehicle traffic is expected in the area.
 - g. When LE personnel arrive, it is their investigation until they release it. Assist them as necessary and follow their instruction. Take direction from them. You may be asked to leave after answering a few questions. USFWS Special Agents will, upon arrival, assume responsibility for security of the site and may relieve other responding LE officers.
4. If you observe an injured Mexican wolf:
- a. Record specifically what injury you observe.
 - b. Is the animal still moving?
 - i. If no, go to Step c (below).
 - ii. If yes:
 - (1) Contact the IFT.
 - (2) Note the specific injury, e.g. blood, broken leg (which leg?), behavior, anything that may indicate the severity of the injury, etc.
 - (3) The Field Projects Coordinator, in consultation with the appropriate IFT Leader and other IFT members, will determine what action, if any, is needed to handle the injured wolf.
 - c. If the animal is not moving:
 - i. Contact the IFT.
 - ii. Follow directions in Step 3, as if it were a dead wolf.
 - iii. If immediate veterinary care is needed, as determined by the appropriate IFT Leader and/or the Field Projects Coordinator, get approval from the responding LE personnel.
5. If you find a dropped radio-collar:
- a. Leave it on site and do not touch it.
 - b. Notify the IFT immediately, to seek guidance from an IFT Leader and/or the Field Projects Coordinator.

6. If you find a cut-off or unscrewed radio collar:
 - a. Leave it on site and do not touch it.
 - b. Follow the directions in Step 3, as if it were a dead wolf.
7. If you find a malfunctioning collar, as determined by seeing a live wolf wearing that collar/frequency:
 - a. Leave the site immediately.
 - b. Notify the IFT immediately and seek guidance from an IFT Leader, the Field Projects Coordinator, or a senior IFT member.

Approvals:

The Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee approved this SOP on November 23, 2004.

References: None

Appendix A.

MEXICAN WOLF REINTRODUCTION PROJECT
Incident Reporting Form for Cooperating Agencies

Date of Incident: _____

Date of Report: _____

Observer(s):

Name: _____

Mail Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Recorder:

Name: _____

Mail Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Incident Type: ☐ Public Safety ☐ Livestock or Pet Depredation ☐ Sighting of a live or dead wolf

Details of Location:

☐ Private Land ☐ Public Land ☐ Other, Specify: _____

Location Specifics (Road #'s, Landmarks, mileposts, etc.): _____

List the phone numbers that were attempted and names of people that were contacted:

Agency:	Name of Person:	Contacted:	Left Message:
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Narrative Account of the Incident:

When completed, FAX to (928) 339-4218 or mail to: Mexican Wolf Project, P.O. Box 856,
Alpine, AZ 85920

Appendix B.

MEXICAN WOLF REINTRODUCTION PROJECT NON-PROJECT PERSONNEL ----- WOLF OBSERVATION REPORT

Date of Observation: _____

Date of Report: _____

Observer(s):

Name: _____

Mail Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Recorder:

Name: _____

Mail Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Details of Location:

☐ Private land ☐ Public land ☐ Other, specify: _____

Location Specifics (road #'s, landmarks, mileposts, etc.): _____

Habitat Description (open, forested, drainage, vegetation, visibility, etc.): _____

Details of Observation/Occurrence:

Approximate time of sighting: _____ Distance between you and wolves: _____

Length of observation: _____

Observation Type:

☐ Live wolf ☐ Dead wolf ☐ Den ☐ Kill ☐ Tracks

☐ Howling ☐ Other, specify _____

Observation By:

☐ Naked Eye ☐ Binoculars ☐ Riflescope

Number of Animals _____ (if known: _____ Adults _____ Young adults _____ Small Pups)

Did you observe radio collars?: ☐ No ☐ Yes If yes, how many wolves with collars? _____

What color were the collars? _____

Physical Description of wolves (color/markings, size, position of tail, etc.): _____

Narrative Account of Observation:

(Appendix B. Continued.)

Observer's prior experience with wolves and coyotes:

Additional Space:

Thank you for your time!

******For Office Use Only******

Reviewed by: _____ **Date:** _____

Nearest known pack location at the time of sighting: Pack-_____ Wolf ID-

Location-_____

Pack/Wolf confirmation: Yes / No / ?

Pack-_____ **Wolf ID-**_____

Miscellaneous/Reason for Sighting Confirmation of Denial: _____

When completed, FAX to (928) 339-4218 or mail to: Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project, P.O.
Box 856, Alpine, AZ 85920